



Hollenberg Station  
State Historic Site

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Duane Durst, Administrator

# Pony Expressions

A quarterly newsletter for Hollenberg Station's Friends and Volunteers

**First Quarter 2009**

**#90**

## Christmas Open House a Big Success

*by Duane Durst, Administrator*

**Our 20th Annual Christmas** Open House was indeed a big success this year. We had lots of adults (the building was packed) as it usually is, but more importantly we had lots of children.

Santa was usual his Jolly self, and the children appreciated the treats. I want to thank the folks that helped and especially the Hanover businesses for donating prizes for the adults. All this effort was greatly appreciated.

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**The Kansas Day Program** on January 28, "Out of the Bedroll" by Don Rowlison, Administrator at Cottonwood Ranch State Historic Site was an overwhelming success. A big Thank You to Don, students, teachers and everyone else who volunteered.

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**Due to budget restraints** this will be my last newsletter that I mail out. Future newsletters will be available at the following website: <http://www.kshs.orgplaces/hollenberg/friends.htm>.

The mailing of this newsletter was made pos-

sible by the generous donation of stamps by Charles and Kelly Hollenberg of Adams, Wisconsin. I would like to thank all the folks that contributed articles for the newsletter and the volunteers who helped compile the newsletter on the computer.

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**We would like to welcome** Berdean Holle as a new volunteer member. Berdean has been a long time Friends member, recently retired from the Citizen's Bank in Hanover.

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**Ladies from the surrounding** area are sewing on the "Log Cabin" quilt that will be given away at the Festival this year.

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**At this time I would like** to extend our condolences to the family of volunteer, Evelyn Gleue, and former Pony Express Rider Sherman (Skip) Skipton. Also the family Bill Loedebore KANZA Chapter member and noted author Gregory Franzwa. They will be greatly missed.

## Calendar of Events

**May 5** — Volunteer meeting, 6:00 p.m. at Wagon Wheel Cafe, Marysville. Ken Martin, historian, will talk about plans being made for the 150th Anniversary of the Pony Express in 2010.

**June 2** — Volunteer meeting, 6:00 p.m. at Ricky's Cafe. Duane Iles, historian from Holton, Kansas, will be the guest speaker. He will talk about improvements made and future plans and

development for Alcove Spring.

**June 10** — Annual Pony Express Re-ride, arrival at Hollenberg Station @ 6:30 a.m. Refreshments served. Public invited.

**July 7** — Volunteer meeting, 6:00 p.m. at the Tiger's Den, Odell, Neb. Dave Anderson, historian, and "Old West Trails Center" staff will be our guest speakers.

**July 17-19** — 14th Annual Plattduutsch Konferenz, hosted by the Low German

Heritage Society of Washington and Marshall Counties will be held in Marysville, KS. A group will tour the site on July 18 at 2:00 p.m. A power point presentation on the life of Gerat Hollenberg will be shown.

**August 4** — Volunteer meeting, 6:00 p.m. at A J's Steak Shack in Washington.

**August 30** — Twenty-fourth Annual Pony Express Festival at Site. Public is invited.

# 150th Anniversary of Pony Express, 2010

Next year we will be celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Pony Express. The following taken from the National Pony Express Association Pamphlet explains the organization.

## NATIONAL PONY EXPRESS ASSOCIATION

"The National Pony Express Association is a nonprofit, all volunteer organization founded in 1978 to 'Re-establish and Re-Ride the Historical Pony Express Trail.'"

"The Association is composed of member State Divisions in the eight states along the trail: California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas and Missouri."

"Each June, members of the National Pony Express Association re-create the Pony Express in a Commemorative Re-Ride over a 10 day period. Letters are carried in a mochila over the original trail."

"Contributions of the Pony Express to the development of communications in the west are commemorated by the **Pony Express National Historic Trail**."

"Through its Re-Ride, publications, resource guides, speakers bureaus, work parties and commemorative events on the trail, it seeks to give the horseman, historian and general public a sense of excitement, danger and accomplishments of the unique historic mail service on the trail."

"Membership is open to all as either a Rider or Associate Member."

The association publishes the *Pony Express Gazette* and *The National Newsletter*.

(From the pamphlet: National Pony Express Association, P.O. Box 236, Pollock Pines, CA 95726.)

## Origins of the National Pony Express Association

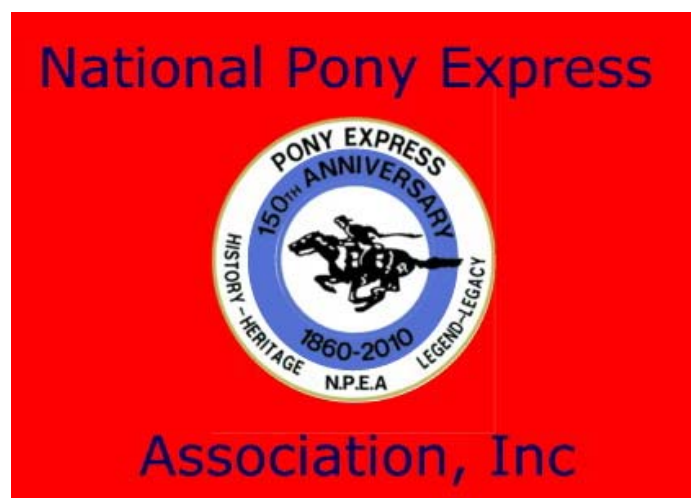
*The next article, submitted by Arleta Martin, historian, gives more detailed information on events that led to the organizing of the National Pony Express Association. Thanks Arleta for your contribution.*

In the mid 1960's a group of horse enthusiasts in El Dorado County California came up with the idea to do a 're-enactment' of the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company – The Pony Express. This was the inception of the national Pony Express Association, as we know it today.

On July 4, 1966, two groups rode, one from Tahoe to Pollock Pines and another from Sacramento to Pollock Pines. In 1967 they carried a vignette/letter, written by Judge Sherrill Halbert, who would write the vignette through 1979. The organizer was Olie Roush, the sponsor was the Pollock Pines Chamber of Commerce, and the promotion was done by Larry Alderman of the Pinto Horse breeders Association. Ten years later, in 1977 the ride was extended to Carson City, Nevada, and in 1978 they carried the mail in Salt Lake City.

On March 3, 1978, the National Pony Express Association was incorporated in the State of California with Mac McFarland as the first President.

The ride was always held on July 4th until 1978 when the ride was extended to Salt Lake, which took 82 hours. Then in 1979 the mail was carried into Julesburg, Colorado. The mail was carried across the entire Pony Express Trail from Sacramento to St. Joseph for the first time in 1980.



# History of Highway 36

## The Pikes Peak Ocean to Ocean Highway

*Part 4 of an ongoing series.*

### Memories of old 36 Highway

*by Wesley (Babe) Zenger*

When I was eight years old I recall many incidents when U.S. 36 was being built by my home, southwest of Haddam. My dad said that they had drilled to test the soil before 1938 to see if it would be a feasible route.

The Clark Construction Company was hired to start the building of the highway. They brought in a crane and started digging a cut through the very steep and high hill of limestone nears our home. They would haul the dirt out with a truck called Ukes. One of the drivers that was hired was Bill Chambers, who at the time was only 16 years old. When they started digging through the big, steep, rough hill, the workers must have dug a little cut on top of the hill and filled in the rough places. Later, smoothing it off so the Ukes could travel on it. Of course, Bill would want to take the first load down. He no doubt left the truck in low gear with the brakes smoking. It was about one-eighth of a mile down the hill, but the drivers had to go the long way around to the south to get back up the hill. Someone came up with a great idea. They decided to anchor a pulley at the top of the hill and put a cable through it so the full Ukes at the top could pull the empty ones back up.

The solid rock had to be blasted. The man who did the blasting was a raw-boned sort of a guy who might have looked the part of a character in a movie. He seemed to have no fear of the blasting procedure. He would park his car close and one day a huge rock landed on the car roof and went right through it.

An incident that could have ended in a tragedy was when the fill boss, known as Strawberry-Roan, found a place to sleep one off after lunch. He thought he had found a place where a dirt dump that wasn't spread out on the edge of a fill wouldn't see him. I guess he was sleeping when

a dozer truck ran over the fill and smashed dirt and shale on his head. As he got his dirty and bleeding head out of the dirt, he got up and chased the dozer. He stopped the operator and told him what he had done. The operator reminded him if had been doing his job he wouldn't have been run over.

Another incident that happened was when Bill Chambers drove his Ukes into soft fill dirt and it caused it to pull off on the edge to far and became stuck in the fill. The Boss was calling to Bill not to dump it, but all that Bill heard was the word "Dump" and he pulled the trip and it dumped and started to slowly roll. Bill was able to bail out.

Bill would go into Haddam to eat a small café operated by the Vern Teeter family. They lived around Haddam most of their 65 years of marriage. They have one daughter, Rhonda. Rhonda and her husband, Tom Cure, reside in the Kansas City area. Bill was known around the area as a very colorful guy, sometimes referred to as "Wild Bill."

One day the crew ran out of gas, so some of them came to our house to borrow a 50 gallon barrel of white gas. They loaded it in Dad's 1937 Chevy Pickup and he got it up the hill. This was the first vehicle to go up the hill that didn't belong to contractors.

My little brothers and I spent a lot of time watching the building of a huge bridge by our place. The Construction Company cleared the right of way and all the trees from the creek bed. I had been visiting my aunt's family for ten day and when I returned home and saw that the clearing was so wide, I realized just how wide this new Highway 36 was going to be.

My Grandpa, Johanas Zenger, immigrated from Switzerland in the early 1880's. He bought the homestead rights in Washington County, Kansas



for 120 acres that was on-fourth mile east of the Republic County line. He paid \$600 for this land. There was a dugout on the land north of where 36 highway is now. He lived in the dugout until he built a new stone house in 1888. It was farther north, and still stands today.

When he first came to this area, he worked for the Chezeks in Republic County. One of his jobs was to keep the straw and chaff away from the threshing machine. The early threshers didn't have blowers on them. During corn shucking time, one family had four members who would shuck two rows of corn on each side of the wagon and Grandpa was hired to shuck the row behind the wagon that the wagon had knocked down.

After acquiring enough money and he had built the new house, it was time to get a wife. He heard about a woman who lived near Washington, KS who had come as an indentured servant from Switzerland. Grandpa went and off her \$75 debt and took Bertha Hotz home to become his wife. They had five children, one girl and four boys. My dad, Walter Zenger, was the oldest boy.

The 120 acres where they lived had a lot of stone hills plus the farm ground. When they were building 36 highway, the state bought seven acres that joined the highway. They wanted to grind up the rocks and material to build a six inch base for the highway. I believe the state still owns that land because, now and again you see material and equipment sitting there.

### Horse-1938

In the early years of highway 36 the Zenger family would move cattle herds of up to 50 head by horseback to pasture. During this time conditions were difficult for driving cattle on the highway. The oil on the road made it slick for both the horses and the cattle. Another obstacle was the traffic. Some motorists would honk on their way by, some would sit and wait it out, while others would take pictures. The riders would try to haze the herd to the edge of the road to avoid traffic. There was usually a lead rider up ahead to warn of oncoming traffic and to prepare to cross intersections. Most of the horses used were raised from colts and broke on the Zenger farm. One of the most memorable horses however, was a bay geld-

ing named "Sonny Boy" that was out of a prized stud horse of Frank Durst.

Babes' father Walter was somewhat possessive of the highway. There was a law that any vehicle parked along the highway must be a minimum of 15 inches away from the oil. Walter never felt the need to give more than the 15 inches. Most of the tractors at this time were on steel wheels, which would be very destructive to the oil highway. Walter kept wood planks at the intersection next to his house so tractors could cross the highway without digging into the oil road.

### School Bus-1952

The year is now 1952 on a farm owned by Babes father and brother Wendell, 2 miles east of the Haddam corner on highway 36. Babe and Betty moved to this farm after being married in June of 1950. In November of 52 a large snow storm hit. The Haddam School turned out early that day. Sometime that afternoon, Bill Chambers came knocking at the door. Bill drove a school bus for Haddam at this time and had gotten stuck a mile north and a little east of the highway. Bill was at the far end of his route and had no way of getting the kids home. The Hoffman kids were not far from home so they went ahead and walked. Babe and Bill went back to the bus in his 49 Chevy pickup and hauled the kids back to Babes in two or three trips. The kids off the bus stayed overnight with Babe and Betty. They had not been staying at the farm for a couple of weeks and this was their first night back, but luckily the Zengers had plenty of milk, eggs, potatoes, and canned goods available. Babe and Betty slept on the cot, allowing for the high school girls to sleep on their bed. The rest of the some 12 kids slept on the floor.

## **White Eagle Station in Haddam**

*by Clyde Bobbitt, as interviewed by Jered Zenger*

During the time that highway 36 ran through Haddam, Clyde's dad Lou had a filling station towards the east end of town. Originally it was a Standard station and Lou would deliver fuel to farmers with a tank wagon pulled by 2 white mules that he owned. Over time the station switched to White Eagle, and Lou delivered his fuel with a hard wheeled International. There were

two white eagle statues that sat out in front of the station and these statues would turn up in neighboring towns quite frequently. It was Clyde's job to retrieve the lost statues. West of the station and across the street, Lou would let travelers pay a fee and park overnight. Many of them would sleep on cots or on the ground. A tire repair was 15 cents, and it wasn't uncommon for customers to trade items in exchange for a fill up. When it was really hot Lou would advertise "Free ice water with a fill up" on signs east and west of Haddam along the highway.

A little ways down the road was an ice house. As a child it was Clyde's job to take his red wagon down to the ice house and fetch a nickels worth of ice. One day the man that owned the ice house got tired of giving out just a nickels worth of ice every time. He told Clyde to tell his dad that from that point forward it would cost him a dime. Lou then explained to the man that from there on out it would cost him a nickel a tire for air. It wasn't long before the owner of the ice house was fine with selling Clyde just a nickels worth of ice. Also just down the street, Ed Wranosky had free picture shows. Travelers were amazed at the entire concept and popularity of the shows.

Across the street from the station, Glen Frye had a Sinclair station. Clyde always looked forward to seeing Glen come back to his station after his lunch break. Glen drove a Plymouth and always came down the street fast and would slide right into his driveway. Lou always told Glen to slow down or he was going to hit one of his own pumps someday. Lou even kept an extra fire extinguisher on hand for this reason. Well, one day Lou got to use his fire extinguisher, because Glen slid into the pump and a fire started. Between the fire department and Lou they got the fire under control.

At times Lou would keep the station open late into the evening. One night a very flashy car stopped in asking for directions. The men in the car were known to have connections with a mafia like organization in Kansas City, and they were looking for a family that had an old shack that was used for a hideout. A lot of excitement took place at this shack and it was used on more than one occasion. There was a rather tough woman that was affiliated with the gangsters that stayed

with the family. During an episode, she shot one of the owners of the shack and it grazed his head. He of course had a different story for the doctor.

In the years surrounding 1937 the new Highway 36 was being built 3 miles south of Haddam. During this time Lou had the workers park housing trailers across the street from his station. Lou had a wash house with a heated tub and he would let the women of these families use the wash house. For the men they had elevated barrels of water heated by the sun. The day the new highway opened for travel, the workers pulled there trailers out of Haddam and Lou had one gasoline sale for 50 cents.

## Memories of old 36 in Courtland

*by Herb Johnson, Courtland*

Rivers change courses, and at times, so do highways. My name is Herb Johnson. I was born on a farm south and west of Courtland, KS. But, when I was 7 years old, my family moved one and one half miles west of Courtland along old 36 Highway.

One memory that I'll always have is during the dust storms there were many cars that stalled in the blowing dirt. They would pull over looking for a place to stay until the wind would let up. Others stopped too, like tramps that walked the highway. I think that our house was marked as a hospitable one as most of them stopped. My mother would always feed them and at times some would do some work for my dad. He would let them sleep in the garage for the night. We never had any trouble with them. I was young and didn't think much about their backgrounds.

One mile north of Courtland highway 36 turned to the east. The turn was one long curve. As high school boys, we would race and see who could take that curve the fastest. It's a wonder that we never got hurt. Between here and Mankato you can still see signs of old 36 running up and down the hills. The new 36 highway is much flatter and wider without all of those hills. The Santa Fe Railroad ran north and south of Courtland. As the intersections were not marked well, there seemed to be lots of accidents with vehicles.

Speaking of cars, a lot of gypsies would travel old 36 in big cars. They would come into town

and into the stores. Before that I remember gypsies traveling in horse drawn covered wagons. Large families, going to where, I never knew.

I once knew an old Swede liked his whiskey. He told me that he was going to take a walk along the road. He said that a certain someone was going to leave him a little whiskey in a certain spot along the road. I was just a kid then, but he didn't fool me. I'm sure he shared a drop or two with my dad. Old 36 highway no longer comes through Courtland. Now, the new one passes one mile north of town. I feel lucky to have lived on old 36 and to see the wonderful changes the new 36 has made.

## Gypsies, etc. of old 36 Highway

*by Duane Durst*

Back in the mid to late 1930's we lived on the Hale place, two miles northwest of Morrowville, KS. I can remember the gypsies stopping on the road south of the barn. My brother and I were playing in the general area and of course mother raised a lot of chickens and they were everywhere and near the road. We had heard stories about the gypsies stealing chickens and even a small child so we hightailed it out of there in a hurry. Mother saw them and came running for chickens were part of our livelihood along with milk cows and hogs. Anyway, mother had a discussion with the gypsies and they were on their way. To this day I still wonder (jokingly of course), if mother was more concerned of the gypsies taking the chickens or of them taking us boys.

I have done some research of the origin of gypsies and their lifestyle, but will not go any further into this than what I already have. Rumors about them were probably meant to scare people more than anything else.

## Mowing in the Thirties

This next remembrance is about mowing along old 36 highway. I can remember that one of the fellows that did the mowing was Ralph Dorman from near Haddam, KS. I can remember Ralph mowing by our farm one summer day with a team of horses hitched to a five foot mower.

I was interested in knowing more about how handled caring for the team and getting home at night, so I called his son, Jim, now living in Texas,

and asked him how his dad managed all of this. He explained that his dad was mowing from the Haddam area east on highway 36 to highway 15 and north to the Nebraska state line. He would mow until quitting time and find a farmer who would take care of his horses overnight. He would then walk back to his vehicle and drive home for the night. The next day, driving to his last stop, prepare the team and continue the mowing process, which required two mower widths on each side of the road. This was quite an undertaking compared to today modern equipment. You do what you have to do when you have a large family to feed.

## The Swimming Hole

In an interview with Wesley (Babe) Zenger he mentioned about a pond that was created east of their place on the north side when highway 36 was being built. This became a swimming hole for the local boys.

In a telephone conversation with Jim Dorman, I mentioned the pond and this is his experience at the pond. Apparently the pond was fed with water from a spring and surrounded by pasture land. This was a good, clean place to swim. He said that trees were left standing in and around the pond and while they were swimming they would climb up in the trees and wait for a car to approach on the highway and when the time was right jump off and moon the people in the vehicle.

And here I thought all along that "mooning" was something new, and not something done in the 1930's.

## Memories of Building 36 Highway

*by Dale Miller*

This is how a story was told to me. Bill Chambers came to Haddam in 1937 as construction works for List and Clark Construction Co. building new 36 highway, three miles south of Haddam. A hill two and one half miles west of Haddam corner near Walt Zenger's place was so steep on the west side. In order to cut down the hill. The equipment would not negotiate such an incline. A block and tackle was rigged so that a load of dirt going down the hill would pull an empty back up.



## Roller Skating by Tractor Power

by Clara Spence Miller

When Orville Dean and I was living right north Tebo School my dad was going to get bales of hay two and one half miles east on highway 36. My brother and I roller-skated behind the hay trailer and tractor. If I remember right, we only met one car. We road home on the hay.

## Blacktopping the Highway

by Marilyn Burt

In 1936, when the new U.S. 36 was being constructed south of Haddam, we lived one mile west and three-fourth mile south of the Haddam corner. My brother, Clayton Burton and I was walking to school at Arlington, and we had to cross the highway to get there. That morning they were putting on blacktop. A man was at the corner, and carried us across so we didn't get blacktop on our shoes.

In 1941 our family, Clark and Marie, Clayton and I moved on highway 36 on the Haddam corner. That fall Clayton was a freshman and went to Haddam High and I was in the eighth grade and went to Tebo, a mile and a half east of the Haddam corner. Lots of days I would roller skate to school. On the corner I would meet Janice (Congleton) Hardentberger and her sister Bobbi and we would all skate on to school. Only five in school, Marjorie (Bolejack) Wells was our teacher.

In those days we had a lot of bums and the folks would always feed them. Had a few wrecks, the

worst one was when Dr. Huntley's brother was killed just west of Bill Keller's and Dr. Huntley. After I was married we lived north of Haddam on old 36 from 1948 to 1952. We lived just one half mile from the little filling station on the north side of the road on old U.S. 36. From Haddam it was one mile north and one and a half east on the north side of the road.

Herman (Pucky) Rahe owned and ran the filling station on his farm. It had only two pumps. One for gas and one for kerosene. Pucky was half Native American and had a lot of artifacts. My husband Edwin Burt collected artifacts, so he and Pucky spent lots of time together. Pucky and his wife Rea were in their 70's at that time and had one girl, Olive, who was married to Wayne Lull. They had a son Bill. Pucky and Rea was a very interesting couple.

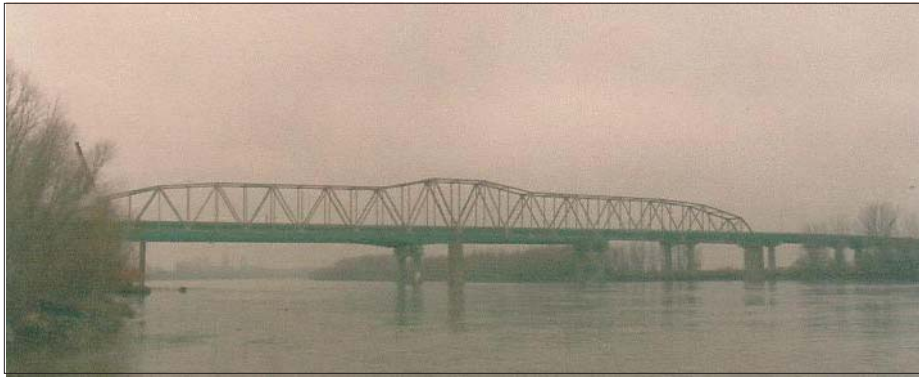
There was another small filling station between Haddam and Belleville on old 36. Was located two miles north of Cuba and four miles west. Its owner was Paul Walthers, and like Pucky Rahe, started it up from scratch. In 1952, we bought my folks' farm three miles south on the new highway 36, where I lived while growing up. That's when my husband Edwin discovered that there was lime in those hills in Grand Township.

Have lived in Washington for 48 years. One day I drove up to Haddam, my home town, and counted 18 places where nobody now lives. Two places were struck by tornados on the Enosdale corner (new 36). A lot of changes on the new Highway 36.



Doniphan County Historical Society

*Photo of Highway 36 through Troy, KS, north side of square, east of Walnut St. Highway 7 joined 36 Highway one block west of this picture on Main St. The white house is where Abraham Lincoln visited on December 1, 1859 as he visited northeast Kansas. It is on the National Historical Register as well as other buildings around the Court House Square (submitted by Pete Duncan, President, Doniphan County Historical Society.)*



*Above: Can you see the two bridges in this photo? The modern bridge in the background is the Pony Express Bridge over the Missouri River between Kansas and Missouri, February 19, 1984. The bridge in front was dedicated August 21, 1929 and demolished after completion of the Pony Express Bridge in 1984. The bridges were located between Elwood, Doniphan County, Kansas and St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri.*



*Above photo montage: Demolition of the earlier Pony Express Bridge in 1984 over the Missouri River as seen from the Kansas side. The bridge still standing in the background is the current Pony Express Bridge which carries Highway 36 between Missouri and Kansas.*







*In the above two photos, only a small section of the early Pony Express Bridge remains (to the right of the photo), exposing the newer bridge in the background. Photos were provided by Pete Duncan, courtesy of the Doniphan County Historical Society.*

As I complete this newsletter, I am going to leave you with a couple quotes. One is from a Randy Travis song: "It's not what you take with you when you leave this world behind you, but what you leave behind you when you leave."

Another quote, "An effort made for the happiness of others lifts us above ourselves." (Author unknown)

